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ABSTRACT

The text of a lecture in the University of Arizona Wilson Lecture Series on values in higher education is presented, with responses by Richard H. Gallagher, Jeanne McRae McCarthy, and Raymond H. Thompson. The theme of the talk is that man is by evolution and by necessity a thinking animal, who now finds himself in a technologically dependent society. Our educational system grew up to meet national objectives, which are summarized in the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States. Of all man's great innovations, the university is the most appropriate response to his nature, and may be the most successful agent for controlled and constructive change. Comments on the lecture focus on these issues: the proportions of federal support of higher education, current proportions of the higher education enterprise, underrepresentation of certain populations in the university community, and the potential for undesirable homogenization of university education. (MSE)

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THE WILSON LECTURE SERIES

VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

O. MEREDITH WILSON

Center for the Study of Higher Education
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Tucson, Arizona 85721

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Dr. O. Meredith Wilson has served in many distinguished positions in his extensive professional career. He was President of the University of Oregon (1954-1960), President of the University of Minnesota (1960-1967), and President and Director of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (1967-1980). He served as Chairman of the Board of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco from 1968 for over a decade and as a member of the Board of Trustees of a diverse roster of educational institutions and corporations, including the University of Notre Dame, the American College Testing Program, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the Nutrition Foundation, the Universities Research Association, the Northern States Power Company, Systems Development Corporation, the Northrop Corporation, O.C. Tanner Jewelry and C.P. National. In the international field, he has served as Chairman of the Board of the Institute of International Education and as a member of the National Committee for UNESCO, the Council on Higher Education in American Republics, and the Advisory Committee on University Relations of the Agency for International Development. Nationally, he has served as Chairman of three major commissions, including the National Advisory Council on Education of Disadvantaged Children, the Commission on Rights, Liberties and Responsibilities of the American Indian, and most recently, the Commission on Higher Education of Minorities. Also, he has served as Chairman of the National Council on Education and is a Benjamin Franklin Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. In addition to these and other distinguished responsibilities, he is the author of an extensive list of publications, with a special concern for the place of values in all aspects of society.



**CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA**

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The objectives of the Wilson Lectures as specified by the trustees are to stimulate interest in, and provoke deliberation on, the fundamental mission of higher education.

The lecture series is planned as an annual event. Each year an outstanding scholar and lecturer in the field of educational philosophy is invited. In addition to presenting a paper, the distinguished visitor holds a seminar for a select group of students and faculty. The lecture presentation is published as part of a series by the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Arizona.

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THE THINKING ANIMAL

When Clara Blegen's mail order vacuum cleaner arrived it was a box of unassembled parts. As she sat in her living room, for three hours puzzling through the directions "bring part B to join part A, push together and twist" etc., her cleaning lady interceded: "Let me do it Mrs. Blegen. You know, if you can't read you've gotta think." This dialogue in the home of the graduate dean at the University of Minnesota may seem to give reading a bad rap, but it is a useful introduction to my remarks, because thinking is my centerpiece.

In spite of occasionally reasserted support for "creationism," evolution is the commonly accepted explanation for the emergence of man. And it is hard to resist the temptation to speculate concerning the first event that separated him from the rest of the animal kingdom. I am satisfied that some act of thinking made the difference. Modern man is neither properly described nor understood if presented only as biologically derived and upward thrust from lesser animals. His brain made the first difference. But how far could the brain develop in an isolated man? Reason, which is the distinguishing characteristic of man, is developed through interaction with other reasoning creatures. It could have matured only within a social framework, and it required speech, of which writing is a useful frozen cross-section.

It is likely that speech grew from the first painful efforts to communicate when one man was seized with the compulsive need to convey an idea to another. Now man everywhere is a speaking animal. Since that first invention of speech all societies have been teachers of speech, and its full significance for a "thinking animal" can hardly be overstated.

Without speech man as a thinking animal would not have developed. And man, if he is not a thinking animal, is not man. It is his thought that makes him noble. Perhaps the most charming phrase confirming this proposition was written by John Wise, in his *Vindication of the Governments of the Churches of New England*. He said "Man is the most favored animal under heaven because that part of God's image, namely reason, is born in him."

Man by the employment of reason has altered his environment and his life more radically in a few thousand years than did the forces of natural selection during millions of years of evolution. Man's mind has stored experience; his reason has exploited it. Fire was experienced, then mastered, and much later understood. Observing nature—perhaps rolling logs—suggested the wheel. Someone trying to move an obstacle too heavy for his physical power stumbled on the principle of the lever. Domestication of plants and animals seems a more simple step. Each generation hoarded the gains of the past and added its own. Soon men were sailing on ships guided by the compass; they rode in trains, then automo-

biles; now they fly; they live under water; and they reach outer space. Indeed when men walked on the moon they made commonplace the wonders of our nursery rhymes. Man through reason has manipulated his environment and has seemed to break free from his biologically imposed limitations. At the present time his rate of change through scientific discovery is exponential.

It is almost as though it were a mathematical formula: control of fire times invention of the wheel times discovery of the lever times discovery of the value of cooperation, that indispensable first political idea that made civil life in safe-walled villages possible. Comparative safety gave him leisure to reflect on the value of tools and encouraged deferring present satisfactions for greater future good. Multiply these by the development of universities, and you make our modern world possible.

Before turning to education as an institution, it seems useful to provide a glimpse into the life of a single family as its members sensed changes that the passing years imposed. We begin with John Adams in 1787. He is our minister in England, wrestling with the problems of trade and diplomacy of the young United States while his colleagues assembled at the Constitutional Convention. During a brief visit to Paris he wrote home to Abigail

I study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy, and geography, natural history, and naval architecture, navigation, commerce, and agriculture, in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain.

John Adams was a lovely man; not always lovely to all people, but always lovely to Abigail. In this quotation he presents a simple, unsophisticated generation-ordered concept of intellectual progress. In a curious way his son's experience confirms his observation. Van Wyck Brooks in the *Flowering of New England* writes of John Quincy Adams

His lectures served as a text book for the rising generation of public speakers. But this was not the writing he had dreamed of . . . when, on Christmas morning, he read Pope's Messiah to his household, or when he noted that an actor's letter, asking for his analysis of Othello, pleased him more than all of his political honors. . . . He longed to think and feel as Shakespeare felt. . . . But his instinct had been blighted by the long winter of Puritanism. . . . The time had not yet come, but the time was coming and [John Quincy Adams] in his pertinacity represented the chill before the dawn.

A half century later his grandson, Henry Adams, wished he might think as Benvenuto Cellini had thought, but he knew that his instinct had been blighted from babyhood. Brooks' assessment of the time for flowering in literature, for my taste, accepts too readily the idea of determinism, but man's horizons are

affected by his times. John Adams was right in this sense; he listed the disciplines in a logical order of dependence: the first set being necessary for sustaining the second, and both of these prerequisite for the third set. If not wrong, at least he implied too much when he assumed that once we had learned one set of principles we could desert them and move to the second, and so on. We, his great, great, great, grandchildren have to study politics and war, mathematics and philosophy all at the same time hoping that there still will remain some leisure time to enjoy music, tapestry, poetry, and porcelain too.

We now live in a technologically dependent society. The fabric of our life is interwoven with creations of science that make us more comfortable: our household tasks less onerous, our garments more durable and more sheer. Our physicians now repair the heart, re-plumb our circulation, rewire our nervous system. Computers make easy the solution of problems that eluded past efforts; specialists put astounding memories in machines by impressing silicon chips, and some scientists talk immodestly of some day being able to electronically overmatch the human brain. With one branch of science we develop tools to wipe out our enemies, who, incidentally, may be ourselves, while another branch is learning to control and perhaps create life forces. If these latter scientists should dominate, man might surmount his biological limitations, winning through his power of reason an exemption from the heretofore ineluctable forces of natural selection. But a word of caution: man by his science might survive cancer, heart disease, even his own violence, but one thing he will not survive—the death of his technology.

Alfred North Whitehead wrote

In the conditions of modern life the rule is absolute: the race which does not value trained intelligence is doomed. . . . Today we maintain ourselves. Tomorrow science will have moved forward yet one more step, and there will be no appeal from the judgment which will be pronounced on the uneducated.

Whether he needed to win a war, to create a new and free republic, to organize a government in which rulers were the people, or to write poetry and make fine porcelain, John Adams knew that the true vocation of man was learning. Whether he saw the threat as an alien and unfriendly power or merely the sheer complexity of a technologically dependent society, Alfred North Whitehead recognized that education was the first need and that without it modern man is doomed. Like the dinosaur that disappeared because it could not adapt to a changing environment, we may now be threatened with extinction because we have become too specialized. We have created a culture dependent upon a high technology, yet in times of economic stress we seem unable to recognize how fatal to our way of life it will be if we fail to support the institutions which prepare and nourish the trained intelligence we require.

EDUCATION

It was only natural that the Thinking Man I have described should seek ways to assure that his children would be taught to think efficiently.

Education in some form is found in the most primitive cultures, but schools appear relatively late in the development of civilizations. Usually a society first relied on the family to preserve values and to teach skills. Quite naturally under a system of familial instruction a carpenter was likely to be both the father and the son of other carpenters. Indeed as a residue of this system you will find each craft or trade matched by a family name in the Anglo Saxon genealogies. A few examples follow: Carpenter, Carter, Fisher, Gardiner, Goldsmith, Shepherd, Taylor, Wainwright. In America the first laws on education were really designed to require families under pain of penalty to teach their young. Next, when family machinery, enjoined by these sanctions, proved inadequate, Massachusetts required that schools be established to promote literacy and good religion.

There were, of course, distinguished schools and universities long before this continent was settled, but it seems instructive to see how they grew here and how they serve us. For my purpose the focus is on the free public schools.

Among the founding fathers of our country it was generally agreed that the people should govern. Jefferson wrote (letter to W.C. Jarvis, 1820) "I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education." His own proposal would have provided to everyone at public expense three years of education. He would have continued with public education for shrinking numbers, sequentially winnowing the wheat from the chaff, finally providing the highest instruction only for the very best minds. Even the three years of free universal public education at the base of Jefferson's proposal did not come easily.

The drive for publicly supported, generally available schools came largely from the labor movement. The labor leaders emphasized the need to be relieved from social and political inequities even more than from economic injustice. The demand was for free public schools. *Free* meant freedom of access by all the people to schools that were themselves free from the taint of charity (J.R. Commons, et al., *History of Labor in the United States*).

Our first free public schools supported by taxes were opened in Philadelphia in 1834. They were a response to a Working Men's Committee report made in 1830. That report said "The original element of despotism is a monopoly of

talent" consigning the multitude to comparative ignorance, reserving knowledge for the rich and the rulers (4 *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, ed. John F. Commons et al., vol. V, pp. 94-101). The committee submitted a bill which it described as follows: "Its benefits and privileges will not, as at present, be limited as an act of charity to the poor alone but will extend equally and of right to all classes and be supported at the expense of all." Only a few years later Horace Mann, as secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education pronounced "Education beyond all other devices of human origin is the great equalizer of the conditions of man." Perhaps the workmen of Philadelphia would have agreed, but intervening years of experience have taught more caution. Education is the great equalizer; if the education is equally distributed (*Letters and Annual Reports on Education*, ed. by Mary Mann, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1867, vol. III, p. 663).

If the working men's vision of equal education for all, supported by all, and without taint of charity were to materialize it might be described as follows: the children of all the citizens of the district attend the same elementary and secondary schools; there they learn to read and write and reckon, and what is more important, they also learn the essential attitudes of democracy.

In the public schools, children of new immigrants and children of itinerant laborers meet with those of fourth and fifth generation Americans who belong to the old establishment. On the Mesabi Range in Minnesota, for example, the free public school offered an introduction to a new culture and a new form of government for the children of Finns, Serbs, Croats, and Scandinavians. This was also their first contact with the English language. For those Northern Minnesota communities the school was the instrument by which a babel of strange tongues could be drawn into one conversation. If conducted with the respect for equality that this model assumes, the school taught children of disparate customs to share a common tradition and to honor a common ideal of freedom.

One aspect of the school is more important in binding the community together than the curriculum, even more important than teaching mastery of a common language. It is the fact that, without taint of charity, from nine in the morning until three-thirty in the afternoon, the child of a hard-rock miner, the son or daughter of a household servant, or the child of the janitor of the school buildings could come to expect the teacher to treat each as an equal. The teacher, a public servant and symbol of public authority, could be expected as a matter of course to give to the child of the least of these as much as could be demanded by the son or daughter of the banker or the school superintendent. Quite as important in this lesson in democracy was what could be learned in these few hours in a government institution by the children of the "rich and rulers": in the ideal model they could expect no more attention than anyone else. Here in the public schools, in the same stroke, pride could be taught to the poor and humility to the rich: a primer of democracy. These schools, founded

and supported by the community, and from which all taint of charity had been removed, were potentially the instruments by which a peasant mentality could be transformed into one filled with expectation and aspiration.

This model would have been endorsed by the Philadelphia Workmen's Committee; and in some places, and to some degree, it has been made real. But the public school as the great equalizer has not worked equally well for all people, certainly not for blacks, nor Chicanos, nor Puerto Ricans, nor American Indians. Prior to the Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown vs the Board of Education of Topeka, et al.* (U.S. Reports 347, 1954, p. 483), the public schools could be used lawfully not to provide but to prevent this practical experiment in democracy. The "separate but equal" provision of education endorsed and made indelible a division within the human race. In a segregated school it is hardly possible to teach pride to the poor nor to modify the arrogance of power. In such a school a poor child has little chance to witness the offspring of wealth wait because a laborer's child has a prior call on the teacher's time. Indeed, they were not even allowed to sit in the same room. Not only were the lessons of democracy not taught in these schools, they were conducted as though white and black were not common members of the human race. The school, the surest instrument for building community, was employed to ensure that no community developed.

Our Black problem is recognized quickly, because the Black's problems were made in America. We are less aware of shortcomings in dealing with Native American and Spanish-speaking citizens or with the effects of poverty on aspiration and self-confidence.

We are now at a stage in our civilization when higher education is essential to full participation in modern life. Those disadvantaged by race or who because of poverty have a childhood background devoid of books receive unequal preparatory education, are poorly prepared to compete on national tests, and are shunted disproportionately into collegiate institutions of lesser quality. We can't express their disadvantage quantitatively. Whatever their biogenic characteristics may be, we have not equipped them to compete equally at the college testing table. Equal education may be the great equalizer, but education unequally applied is a disaster for the disadvantaged. It is as though some are asked to run barefoot against others equipped with track shoes. Only the most determined and best endowed can succeed. The value to a democracy of an education that prepares for higher education is that it provides equally for all. It must reach as far down as is necessary to engage the student, and it must lift each one. It must respect what the student already knows, and it must stretch that student toward proper personal and social goals. One of these goals is higher education.

EDUCATION AND OUR NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Each of us may have a personal list of objectives, but in a peculiar way those stated in the Preamble to the Constitution belong to all of us:

We the people of the United States in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Even in those simpler times education was recognized as essential to our goals. The Land Ordinance of 1785 set aside a central section in each township to be devoted to education. Two years later the Parson's Amendment set aside two townships in the new Federal Territory for a university. And the Third Article of the Northwest Ordinance says "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." George Washington seriously considered including a request for a university in his inaugural, and Thomas Jefferson was sure he would be best remembered as a founder of the University of Virginia.

To realize a *more perfect union*, in 1787 our founding fathers wrote a commerce clause to reduce confusion in trade among the states and invested the power to levy tariffs in the Federal government to save external trade from bedlam. Highways and post roads and river and harbor bills facilitated interstate travel, and the Postal Service provided communication. All of these require little special knowledge. Their modern counterparts are infinitely more complex. The telephone involving satellite service, computer-based electronic funds transfer, and prodigious memory banks are necessary lubricants to the wheels of commerce and to the conduct of business. Without silicon chips and computer consoles, the Federal Reserve Banks and the unified operation of our financial structure would be impossible. They would be buried in an avalanche of paper. And who is to imagine the next improvement in telecommunications that will improve the already instantaneous contacts between coast and coast, binding us in even more perfect union? The task is one for modern technology, and the skills are found high on the pyramid of our intellectual capital.

The establishment of justice and tranquility were the second and third stated objectives. In the back of the founders' minds lurked the memory of Shays' Rebellion, an angry response to injustice. There were also disputes over western lands and an ever-present danger of slave unrest.

After ten years under the Articles of Confederation our people longed also for tranquility. There can be no abiding order in an unjust society. Disorder is only a symptom. In a democracy the principal cause is inequality. One perceived injustice is likely to be unfair distribution of educational opportunity. Domestic tranquility requires a world in which a case such as *Serrano vs Priest* is not necessary; in which children from all ranks are supported in their passion for knowledge; in which families are sheltered from poverty and the stunting effects of malnutrition are lifted from their children. If educational opportunity were fairly distributed, and if each child started life with a fair chance of success, a great part of our urban unrest would disappear. Education, based on a sure knowledge of how people learn, distributed equitably among everyman's children is necessary if we are to deserve tranquility, order, and justice at the same time.

Our fourth objective is national defense. A catalogue of modern weaponry is all that is necessary to establish our dependence on scientific developments. Missiles and anti-missiles, nuclear power and nuclear holocaust, radar and radar evasion, telecommunications and scrambling devices, strategic weapons, tactical weapons, smart weapons—all are completely a product of technology. And tomorrow's ingenuity will grow out of new advances in basic science. Two paraphrases seem justified. Whitehead can be revised to say the Nation that does not value trained intelligence is doomed; and the preacher in *Ecclesiastes* who said "Wisdom is better than strength" can also be rephrased: *Wisdom is our strength.*

Each of these first goals stated in the preamble is a means toward insuring the culminating objective of our founding fathers which was "to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." The blessings of liberty are incomplete unless we can be secure against unnecessary disease and discomfort. What wonders the science of medicine has worked. I am at liberty to walk because a British doctor dared to think about artificial hip joints; someone in this audience is alive because of a heart by-pass. As recently as my childhood we assumed that to touch the heart was to kill; now heart surgery is commonplace. It is within our power to make all our citizens free from cold and hunger. And we have leisure to savor the beauty of nature, poetry, art, and music. As I write, a song runs through my mind:

*God who created me
Nimble and light of limb,
In three elements free
To run, to ride, to swim.
Not when the sense is dim,
But now from the heart of joy,
I would remember him.
Take the thanks of a boy.*

Henry Charles Beeching: *Prayers*

And I add, take also the thanks of a patched-up old man—now less nimble but again free to run, to ride, to swim because man's reason and courage has intervened in his behalf.

We do have liberty: we are free to run, to ride, to swim, and to speak our minds without fear of despotic governments. Our founding fathers would be proud of the liberty they made possible to us, for we are a free people. Indeed, we have more freedom than we have the courage to use.

None of these blessings can be achieved without education. In the words of James Madison "Popular government without popular education is a prologue to a farce or a tragedy." It is unfortunate that a simplistic analysis of the role of education has led many to believe that it is a local function and should be supported by local governments only. Local values are of great importance, but these goals and obligations are national. We learned by early mistakes in the War of 1812 that we could not trust national security to the state militias alone. I hope we will not require a national tragedy to teach us that in the research aspects of the modern university the Federal stake is paramount.

THE UNIVERSITY

Of all man's great innovations the university is the most appropriate response to his nature. It may also be his most successful agent for controlled and constructive change. In the space allotted here, I cannot fully describe its genius, but my affection and faith in a university do demand of me a statement about its nature.

1. A university is a place where tomorrow is made. True, it was founded to preserve tradition; to codify the laws of man and nature; to evaluate art, music, and the civilizing forces of culture. But its concern about the past is prompted by the faith that, if men are warned and informed by the historical record, they can more successfully wrest the secrets of the universe from obscurity and can more confidently make a tomorrow into which man may walk willingly and with hope.

2. A university is a place of optimism and faith. If its denizens did not believe that men could know more and do better, their energy would be sapped. They are aware of life's imperfections but believe that the power of reason is inexorable and that the most difficult problems will yield to importunate inquiry. Registration at a university is an act of faith. Study is a form of personal capital

formation. A university can only exist among men who believe that by deferring immediate satisfactions they might enjoy them later, richly intensified.

3. A university is an agent of change. It is a threat to all forms of authority and a challenge to all current personal convictions. Some of our convictions are confirmed by inquiry. Others are exposed as prejudice. Since error is the chief enemy of understanding, the university does us great personal service when, by application of the laws of learning, it reveals personal mistakes. To discover our own error should be the occasion for celebration, for by correcting error we move toward a better tomorrow. It is a tragic commentary on human weakness that the sounds of joy we emit when we are discovered to be in error are so muted.

4. A university is a community constrained by its own morality and possessed of its own catechism. Of every generalization it asks, is it in accord with all the available evidence, and does it respect the rule of parsimony? As the search for truth proceeds the university applies its own canons of honesty and provides automatic enforcement of its moral code. If a scholar, to protect his own bias, tries to warp or constrain the evidence, he at once destroys his bridge to any higher order of truth and at the same time renders himself ridiculous in the eyes of his fellow scholars. He is at once dishonest and foolish.

5. Every university is devoted to the improvement of the mind of man. And each university feels the obligation to certify personal development with a diploma. The general acceptance of these documents gives credence to Kenneth Boulding's remark that "Every university is the same university. Each is but a local branch of the same church." Yet the use of the church as an analogue is unsatisfactory in a specific sense. The function of a church is to know the truth. The function of a university is to seek it. In a church it is possible to defend dogma as a salty epitome of an eternal verity, whether revealed or derived. In a university any dogma is anathema; every assumed truth is subject to analysis; all established authority is properly questioned. Every proposition, however generally accepted, is only the best formulation available until now. The university spirit tells us that we act on the basis of the best knowledge now extant, fully prepared to have new evidence unsettle today's certainties. In such an environment, pluralism is the natural consequence, and tolerance is not merely a desirable good but a necessary condition for the intellectual life. The university's existence is a promise not only that old dogmas will be challenged but also that the instrument of attack will be reason, the method will be inquiry, and the climate of the conversation will be cool and clear.

6. A university is a world of the mind in which man best achieves his destiny as the thinking animal. One can set no bounds to thought once it is set in motion; neither nations nor creeds can confine it. Just as laws of learning enforce their own morality, so also the boundlessness of thought breeds univers-

ality. And the diffusion of the gifts of reason among all men teaches, if not a common brotherhood, at least a common manhood. A university by its nature presses toward one world and a unity among men.

Response by Richard H. Gallagher

Professor of Civil Engineering and
Dean, College of Engineering
University of Arizona

It is a very special privilege for an engineering educator to be invited to provide comments on a lecture dealing with values in education. Certainly, in the popular image, engineers—and in particular, engineering educators—are not noted for placing values nor the principles of education at the highest point on their agenda. Moreover, it has given me an opportunity to hear this marvelous lecture this afternoon. My remarks are, more than anything else, in the form of a number of questions, preceded by a perspective on those questions.

Dr. Wilson brought out his view of the desirability of the governmental role in education. From my vantage point, the United States has had a tradition of rather limited support to education by the federal government. The past two decades, on the other hand, have seen an explosive increase of that support. These expenditures form collectively only a small part of the overall expenditures in education in this country. And now we see some actions which reverse the trend of federal involvement.

Two points come to mind: one, Dr. Wilson has based several of his propositions on the preamble of the Constitution. I might ask if it's not a two hundred year tradition of state or lower governmental or private support of education, rather than governmental support, that present the same imperative as the preamble to the Constitution.

A second question, related to this one, concerns expanded federal governmental support and what it holds out in the way of a prospect for the presence of the diverse system of education in the United States. In my view, the latter has to have an unsurpassed advantage, especially in the development of the mechanisms whereby more opportunities can be given to all. Does not the federal mandate risk the loss of those same opportunities? Might we not jeopardize the attributes of the university he articulated so clearly at the close of his lecture this afternoon?

We might also ask is the higher educational enterprise in the United States in much greater proportion than it ought to be? One is reluctant to voice this question because governmental actions are in progress that are likely to reduce the enterprise, and all of us share in this apprehension and concern about the possible impact. It is a question, however, that we cannot fail to ask if we talk to individuals outside of the universities. The percentage of this population engaged

in studies in government-supported higher education institutions in Japan, the United Kingdom, in most of Western Europe, is a fraction of that in the United States. Yet, having decided on what they will support, a nation such as the United Kingdom has made an extensive commitment to full support of those who could not otherwise afford to attend.

One of the issues here, of course, is expectation. A shift to reduced expectation has in fact transpired in many spheres of life in the United States—and I would say that engineers are especially conscious of this. Dramatic shifts in housing expectations and financial consumption are forced upon us by limitations of both natural and financial resources. The events seen in those areas, and also in some facets of higher education, disclose that unrealistic expansion may result in fewer opportunities than existed prior to that expansion and, indeed, higher costs for those being served. Consequently, I might ask would higher education be best served by efforts which define its strongest configurations within the framework of reduced resources?

I would like to close with this brief comment. In the United States for forty years, we have seen a roller coaster of education, entitlement, and loan programs—beginning with the World War II G.I. Bill. That certainly motivated much of the level of expectation we see today. National policies for educational opportunity have been enunciated at various times, but, interestingly enough, not in concert with the entitlement programs. This leads to a final thought. As advocates of our own system, we need much more public discussion of national educational philosophy. Through that, I would hope we could arrive at some rough bounds where education is headed.

Response by Jeanne McRae McCarthy

Professor and Head
Department of Special Education
University of Arizona

In a presentation that President Wilson made about a decade ago, he developed a thesis that the first priority of higher education of our society, and of each of us personally, is the cultivation and perfection of individual men and women. Today he has spoken of equal and equitable distribution of opportunities for education—to all. For most of us, that's not controversial. And yet, as you discuss the reality of open access to higher education for all of the members of our society, some members of our society find it controversial.

Dr. Wilson has painted an idealistic image toward which we all need to strive and exhorted us to move towards a better tomorrow. The questions that I would hope you are asking yourself, as I am, are How do I do it? Given the state of the art as we know it, how do we move from here to there? What's the first step that we realistically can take in the here and the now? How do we deal with the variation of response that we are going to find in our funding agencies and in the people that run them? That one is difficult because of the extent of the depth and the prejudice that we find in many of the people who are controlling the purse strings to all of our institutions.

Dr. Wilson has also urged us to make credible our national ethic, addressing respect for the individuality of each person in our society, the cultivation and the perfection of individual persons. I love that. In special education, we look at children that other people have given up on totally and look to see what we can do next. We know that we can teach something to every child. I think that is extremely important. So, the idea of respect for the individuality of each person in our society—no matter how different that person may be—is logical to a special educator. However, I'm not sure that it is to the Office of Management and Budget.

If we are to be responsible for the integrity of what we are—to be ethical creatures, concerned with values in higher education—we must stop the rhetoric and take that next step toward the cultivation and perfection of those populations under-represented in our university community.

Dr. Wilson has referred specifically to blacks and Hispanics. I would like to add the handicapped and women and our Native American population. As a society, we are being weighed in the balance of the moment, as we balance opposing impulses. Is it enough to recruit promising young Indian high-school

seniors, for example, which we do all the time, and then let them drown when they get into our university community? Is it enough to recruit black athletes or handicapped artists, or the top ten percent of our Hispanic youths, and, at the same time, neglect the elements of the system which are insuring that only a minute fraction of these groups will ever survive? Can we assuage our consciences with the token efforts now being made? Or do we need to design a realistic, overall plan to move toward the cultivation and perfection of those segments of our population which are now being denied access to our universities—a denial that is set before birth for most of them or certainly in the very first few months of life.

In special education we know, in answer to many of these questions, truths which can be generalized to other segments and other populations. We know, for example, that if we wait until blind children are twelve months old without stimulating their other senses, their disability will be compounded from lack of sensory input. They are likely to develop autistic behavior, self-assuming behavior, that exaggerates the original problems of blindness. With vision impairment we have to get in there in the first few months of life. If we start to educate deaf children in the first twelve months of life they may be able to progress with their hearing peers and avoid placement in the deaf ghettos of the past. But it doesn't happen unless we get in there very early! We also know that if, at birth or before, we can identify the undernourished, borderline retarded, teenage mother-to-be, and create a nourishing, stimulating and creative environment attuned to the rhythm appropriate to her own abilities and background, her baby will not be retarded, undernourished, nor unfulfilled.

We know how to break the cycle of poverty in sub-standard homes. We cannot begin by looking at high-school seniors, or juniors, or freshmen, or sophomores. We need a national imperative to get in there very early and create the kind of environment that will prepare more of these populations for admission to our universities when they get to that age.

Now let me list some questions: Consider the ability of all persons to perfect themselves individually, to develop the altruistic values that Dr. Wilson has described so eloquently. Let us be reminded of Bronowski's optimism about the ascent of man—the ability to take that next step to reach an understanding of himself and his less-privileged brothers. Bronowski points out that our actions as adults, as decision-makers—as human beings, are mediated by values, which I interpret as a general strategy in which we balance opposing impulses. It is those opposing impulses that we really need to evaluate very carefully as we think about the values in higher education.

The altruistic principles of open access to higher education, suggested by Dr. Wilson, are at variance with reality right now. However, I don't think they need

to continue to be. We have been exhorted to go back and look at our society's commitment to the ethic expressed in the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal, with certain inalienable rights, and add an affirmation that the first object of government is the winning of these rights for all people. In my field, it has been found necessary to mandate a free, appropriate public education for all handicapped children under public law 94-142. Apparently, all of the social documents that we have on the books, and have had for hundreds of years, have not done it. So, in 1975 we came along with another mandate. To buttress further the rights guaranteed in the Constitution, the rules and regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act were signed into law in 1977. These rules and regulations said exactly the same thing all of our other social documents had said: "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall solely, by reason of handicap, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Apparently, whatever we have on the books is not working, and we need to add layer upon layer upon layer of mandates.

One of the reasons for this can be laid to the philosophy of the aristocracy of the intellect, or who has a right to higher education? The work of John Von Neumann, the mathematician, philosopher, and strategist, in his book, *The Computer and the Brain*, is very relevant in this discussion. Although he speaks of life as a system of values, he himself was in love with the aristocracy of intellect. That kind of thinking, which permeates our whole society, was brought home to me very conclusively recently on an airplane in which a fellow passenger was berating the selection system used in our medical schools. His point was that the top medical schools should select the top students with no regard to variables in intelligence, test scores, and grade point average. He was irate that any preferences should be given, particularly to in-state students. His son had applied to a school out of his state and was not given preference because he was from out of state. He was also irate that preference should be given to any variables other than IQ score and test scores. The chauvinism built into his attitude was incredible, but he didn't even realize it. He thought it made good sense and that everybody thought the same thing. When I suggested that IQ scores and test scores did not correlate perfectly with performance as a physician, that other variables needed to be considered, he was appalled! He almost moved and changed seats. He, like Von Neumann, was in love with the aristocracy of intellect.

Today, we have been exhorted to think, if I interpret Dr. Wilson correctly, that we need to avoid the complacency toward the potential destruction of our value system. We must not be in love solely with the democracy of the intellect. Knowledge must sit in the homes and in the heads of the people who are now among the disadvantaged in our society.

Apparently, it has been necessary to pass all of these laws making illegal the discrimination against minorities and women and the handicapped. This is a sad commentary on the cultivation and the perfection of individuals in our society. In my experience, all of the laws are not going to have much real effect on the values in the hearts of women and men—in my fellow passenger's heart. Some will continue to find ways to circumvent a respect and recognition for the individuality of different individuals in our society until values have been assimilated into a personal ethic.

Response by Raymond H. Thompson

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Obviously, this afternoon we are dealing with some of the basic principles of American society to which we all subscribe, and so, there is no great controversy for us to deal with. I would like, however, to expand a little bit on the ideas Dr. Wilson has given us and to address myself to two basic things. Clearly, we are dealing with a wonderful Jeffersonian principle—that the good citizen is an informed citizen. And we are talking about better ways of providing equal educational opportunities for all our citizens. In the process of doing that, however, we face two very serious problems.

One of the problems of making equal educational opportunities available to everyone is that we risk homogenizing the education itself. We see that as a serious problem in recent years as we bring people from different cultures, with different languages, different traditions, into the mainstream of our society, or at least we believe we do. Also, perhaps, we deprive them, and I would insist, perhaps more importantly, ourselves and the mainstream culture, of the important values that exist in those other cultures and those other traditions that are expressed in our languages. We need very much to work upon protective mechanisms in our system that enable us to make the evolving American culture a culture which takes advantage of all that comes from these different kinds of peoples, cultures, traditions, and languages.

Secondly, we have another problem. Because as we try to provide education for everyone, we, in a way, cover the conflict with another great American principle—a kind of Horatio Alger syndrome—that once you provide opportunities you are in fact opening the door for an individual to his or her own merit, own accomplishments, to rise very high and to achieve in a great and wonderful way. With that, the homogenizing principle comes into play again. How do we, as we provide educational opportunities for everybody, also preserve those wonderful aspects of the educational experience whereby the distinguished teacher can stimulate the student who wishes to be excited beyond the common level of the education? How do we attract and entice those people who have the greater ability to put that ability to work, learning how to think better and learning how to serve their nation better?

I am trying to put this in terms of the nation because in the long run education is not something that is a privilege; it is not something that we just

spread evenly to everyone. It is something that every nation must do in that Jeffersonian way to further its own interests. It is very much to the self-interest of this nation that the largest number of citizens have the best possible education, learn how to think in the clearest fashion, have the best body of knowledge to bring to bear in making those special kinds of judgments that citizens have to make every day in their lives. And so, I was very pleased to hear Dr. Wilson refer to the question of local versus national goals in the educational enterprise.

The one thing that unifies mankind as well as distinguishing the human animal is the ability to think. We must recognize that thinking is an international thing, not something that we own in the United States and throw back and forth in the tennis court between the local communities, the states, the federal government, and the private sector. Thinking is something that belongs to all of us. Knowledge is something that belongs to all of us. Knowledge is international. Knowledge does not have strictly local connotations. Knowledge has local applications, but knowledge is something that is universal. Therefore, it is essential that we preserve the idea that the American system is a unique partnership that we have forged between the federal, the state, and the local governments and the private sector—a partnership that involves an ongoing dialogue; a partnership that involves a two-way street; a partnership that involves cooperation; a partnership that never ceases and never ceases to change. We are not going to solve the problems of education in this country, deliver educational opportunities to larger numbers of citizens, and create a large body of informed citizens if any one of the members of this partnership in effect abdicates its responsibilities and its role in that special kind of partnership that we have. I am not worrying about New Federalism or Old Federalism, because, in fact, we have always been a federal nation. What we are debating, then, is the degree to which different parts of this federalism play certain kinds of roles. The important thing is not that we withdraw, or allow one of the partners to withdraw, but that we continue to maintain the dialogue between all members of the partnership.

Finally, I was very much pleased to hear Dr. Wilson emphasize ideas and thinking. In the present environment we are losing a recognition, as he tried to point out to us, that universities are places where we teach people to think. They're not really places where we teach them to be engineers or educators or anthropologists or geologists; that isn't our primary purpose. They are not places where we teach them to make annual salaries of \$20,000 versus \$5,000 the first day out of college. That's not our job. Our job is teaching people to think—and teaching them to be excited about thinking! That excitement is what will allow them to carry out the ultimate purpose of the university: exploring the wonderful frontiers of knowledge that are yet out there and unknown. We are thankful President Wilson has stimulated us to be concerned about the nature of our educational system and the values we will always want to debate.

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